

# Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

## News and notes on Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program

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## Heritage Day Poster 2013

*By Andrea O'Brien*

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) will be celebrating national Heritage Day on Monday (February 18th), at 10:30 a.m., at Quidi Vidi Village Plantation, 10 Maple View Place, Quidi Vidi, St. John's.

The Honourable Terry French, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, along with representatives from the education and heritage communities and municipal and provincial governments, will join HFNL as the winners of this year's provincial Heritage Places Poster Contest are announced. Over 1000 students from 50 schools across the province produced submissions for the contest. This contest was open to all schools in the province, and was organized through HFNL. The winning submission is featured on the Foundation's poster promoting Heritage Day in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Victoria Fitzgerald, a grade 11 student at Gonzaga High School, St. John's, submitted the overall winning submission. The winning submissions at the other grade levels were:

- Primary – Jorja Pevie, Grade 3, Jakeman All Grade, Trout River,
- Elementary – HaeNa Luther, Grade 5, Stella Maris Academy, Trepassey and,
- Junior High – Ashley Synyard, Grade 7, Roncalli Central High, Avondale.

Judges for the event included Margaret Walsh Best, artist and art educator; and Debra A. Barnable, visual artist and consultant. Please visit our website at [www.heritagefoundation.ca](http://www.heritagefoundation.ca) to view the winners. Heritage Day is celebrated on the third Monday of February each year. It is an opportunity to explore the past and to discover what shaped our communities and our history.

## Pernicky: Traditional Czech Gingerbread

*By Christina Robarts*

As part of a series of interviews with the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, in cooperation with Dr. Mariya Lesiv, I have been connecting with a number of individuals who wish to share their stories and experiences as new Canadians living in Newfoundland and Labrador. During one of these interviews I was talking with Jindra Maskova, who is originally from the Czech Republic, about Pernicky (Gingerbread cookies) and the traditions surrounding them.

**Jindra:** I don't know how popular is gingerbread in different Eastern-Europe? But it's huge in Czech. Like every farmers market before Christmas you buy, cookies and its huge I have a book it really is 500 years old it's, it's a old tradition and we have like these magazines. Easter is very popular too so we make the Easter cookies, but it's basically Pernicky is the gingerbread, so you have these magazines only about Gingerbread... So mom sends me usually for inspiration. So people like make nativities scenes from gingerbread and basically anything.

**Christina:** Are they very hard to do or time consuming?

**Jindra:** Well the decorating is, very, but the baking is not as much. This is how we used to get, when I was small this is copy of very old ones. They used to bake like a big... Oh I forgot about this, before Christmas we have St. Nicolas Day the fifth of December, which people don't celebrate here, but that's the original St. Nicolas. We used to give ah food or nuts or some kind of candy into stocking and usually St. Nicolas, devil and an angel usually come to every house and we used to get baked gingerbread cookie and they put this paper face on it, on the icing. So I remember that when I was small and now they do it you can cut it and make it.

The Pernicky that Jindra makes is not just for the Christmas and Easter holidays. Jindra has been making them all year round, for many different holidays and fundraisers. Included here are some examples of her Valentine's Day Pernicky.

*(Photographs are courtesy of Jindra Maskova, February 2013.)*



## Romancing the Cable Station

*By Lisa Wilson*

During one of my excursions to Heart's Content I asked residents Bob and Gina Balsom if they had any interesting stories to tell from their years of working at the Cable Station Historic Site.

Gina smiled, remembering some of the more romantic moments that the building has seen. From old-fashioned proposals to eloping Americans, Heart's Content has drawn visitors seeking a certain kind of romantic experience.

Bob told me a few stories, while Gina encouraged him with little bits of what she could remember. It was nice to hear a couple, who has been together for 44 years, reflecting fondly on the love of others.

Here are two stories of romance in the cable station:

"This young man and his fiancée came in... well, she didn't know that they were about to get married or anything. We had an area in the building where visitors could tap messages out on the coded keys, back and forth, on a long table. He went and tapped a message to her. They could interpret the message because we had morse code there on both ends of the table, so they could read and do the dashes and dots and so-on."

"And he tapped out the message 'Will you marry me?' and she was on the other end and went a little bit... well she was yelling and crying and everything else. He had a ring there too, and he gave it to her. So of course she said 'Yes,' and they wrote it down on our log as they went out. So it's down at the Cable Station now somewhere in the guestbook. We've got a picture of them down there, there's a picture of them."

"We've also had two weddings down at the station. An older couple got married there, and a young couple from California. It was a secret thing, nobody knew anything about it. They eloped actually, on Valentines Day. Heart's Content-- they saw the name on the Internet and just decided that they wanted to come here to get married."



"At first they wanted to get married at the lighthouse. Not a very warm and cozy place in the middle of February to get married--too cold and windy. So they decided to get married at the cable station and we made the arrangements. It was all supposed to be quiet although CBC found out about it and they showed up. The bride was saying 'No,' as there wasn't supposed to be any hoopla, television or anything, but in the end, they said 'Okay, go ahead.' They got married, it was a wonderful time. They had a great time."

*(Photos: Bob Balsom and Gina Balsom. Photos by Lisa Wilson.)*



## Nurse Gwen LeGrow Remembers Her Honeymoon

by Nicole Penney

To honour St. Valentine's Day, here is a cute story told by Gwen LeGrow, who worked as a nurse in outport Newfoundland. She was interviewed in the mid 1980s by Marilyn Marsh from Memorial University's School of Nursing on the many aspects of nursing in this province. When stationed in the outports, nurses were usually the only health care providers available for kilometers, with rugged terrain and coastline separating communities from the few doctors available. An outport nurse could be called on any time of the day; here LeGrow discusses how not even her own wedding could keep her from tending to someone.

**Marilyn Marsh:** You were just finishing off your story, telling me about the night of your honeymoon. And you went to the lady and had to stay with her through her delivery until 8 o'clock in the morning.

**Gwen LeGrow:** That's right.

**MM:** Can you pick it up there again?

**GL:** I remember she had a baby boy. And after that, of course, I walked back to where we were, the boarding house, where we lived, and got back into bed with Fred. *(both laugh)*

**MM:** and he was still waiting.

**GL:** So that was our wedding night! *(laughs)* Not many people go out to a maternity case on their wedding night.

**MM:** Not very many, no. But you know, that's part of being a nurse. Isn't it? That is kind of amusing and unexpected but at the same time I'm sure you missed a few Christmases or Christmas dinners because of your nursing?

**GL:** Yes, yes but that's right. But where it was, you know, where you were stationed in these outports, you were there and if anybody wanted you, what used to sort of tickle me, they'd come to the door and they used to say, "Nurse you gotta come!" *(laughs)* "You've got to come!" ...not "will you" or one thing or another, but "Nurse you've got to come, my mother's sick, you've got to come!" So regardless of what time of the day, year or what it was, there was nobody else, you went and it didn't matter where it was.

*Listen to the full interview with Nurse LeGrow on Memorial University's Digital Archives Initiative at <http://tinyurl.com/cem86o5>*



*Last year, while I was attending ICH meetings at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, I snapped this photo on the Pont des Arts (or Passerelle des Arts), a pedestrian bridge over the Seine River. Wikipedia notes, "In recent years, many tourist couples have taken to attaching padlocks with their first names written or engraved on it to the railing or the grate on the side of the bridge, then throwing the key into the river below, as a romantic gesture." This tradition of attaching locks as a symbol of love to an object is not specific to Paris. Similar public displays of affection have popped up around the world, but the tradition seems to be most popular in Asia and Europe. Happy St. Valentine's Day!*

- Dale Jarvis

